

## IMO meeting adopts accelerated single-hull tanker phase-out, new regulation on carriage of heavy fuel oil

*Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) - 50th session: 1 and 4 December 2003*

IMO has adopted a revised, accelerated phase-out scheme for single hull tankers, along with other measures including an extended application of the Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) for tankers and a new regulation banning the carriage of Heavy Grade Oil (HGO) in single-hull tankers.

The amendments to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78) were adopted at the 50th session of IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and are expected to enter into force on 5 April 2005, under the tacit acceptance procedure.

The MEPC met at IMO Headquarters in London, 1 and 4 December 2003, under the chairmanship of Mr. Andreas Chrysostomou (Cyprus). The meeting ran concurrently with the 23rd session of the IMO Assembly which met from 24 November to 5 December 2003.

### Accelerated phase-out for single-hull tankers

Under a revised regulation 13G of Annex I of MARPOL, the final phasing-out date for Category 1 tankers (pre-MARPOL tankers) is brought forward to 2005, from 2007. The final phasing-out date for category 2 and 3 tankers (MARPOL tankers and smaller tankers) is brought forward to 2010, from 2015.

The full timetable for the phasing out of single-hull tankers is as follows:

Category of oil tanker	Date or year
Category 1	5 April 2005 for ships delivered on 5 April 1982 or earlier 2005 for ships delivered after 5 April 1982
Category 2 and Category 3	5 April 2005 for ships delivered on 5 April 1977 or earlier 2005 for ships delivered after 5 April 1977 but before 1 January 1978 2006 for ships delivered in 1978 and 1979 2007 for ships delivered in 1980 and 1981 2008 for ships delivered in 1982 2009 for ships delivered in 1983 2010 for ships delivered in 1984 or later

Under the revised regulation, the Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) is to be made applicable to all single-hull tankers of 15 years, or older. Previously it was applicable to all Category 1 vessels continuing to trade after 2005 and all Category 2 vessels after 2010. Consequential enhancements to the CAS scheme were also adopted.

The revised regulation allows the Administration (flag State) to permit continued operation of category 2 or 3 tankers beyond 2010 subject to satisfactory results from the CAS, but the continued operation must not go beyond the anniversary of the date of delivery of the ship in 2015 or the date on which the ship reaches 25 years of age after the date of its delivery, whichever is earlier.

In the case of certain Category 2 or 3 oil tankers fitted with only double bottoms or double sides not used for the carriage of oil and extending to the entire cargo tank length or double hull spaces, not meeting the minimum distance protection requirements, which are not used for the carriage of oil and extend to the entire cargo tank length, the Administration may allow continued operation beyond 2010, provided that the ship was in service on 1 July 2001, the Administration is satisfied by verification of the official records that the ship complied with the conditions specified and that those conditions remain unchanged. Again, such continued operation must not go beyond the date on which the ship reaches 25 years of age after the date of its delivery.

### Carriage of heavy grade oil

A new MARPOL regulation 13H on the prevention of oil pollution from oil tankers when carrying heavy grade oil (HGO) bans the carriage of HGO in single-hull tankers of 5,000 tons dwt and above after the date of entry into force of the regulation (5 April 2005), and in single-hull oil tankers of 600 tons dwt and above but less than 5,000 tons dwt, not later than the anniversary of their delivery date in 2008.

Under the new regulation, HGO means any of the following:

- crude oils having a density at 15°C higher than 900 kg/m<sup>3</sup>;
- fuel oils having either a density at 15°C higher than 900 kg/m<sup>3</sup> or a kinematic viscosity at 50°C higher than 180 mm<sup>2</sup>/s;
- bitumen, tar and their emulsions.

In the case of certain Category 2 or 3 tankers carrying heavy grade oil as cargo, fitted only with double bottoms or double sides, not used for the carriage of oil and extending to the entire cargo tank length, or double hull spaces not meeting the minimum distance protection requirements which are not used for the carriage of oil and extend to the entire cargo tank length, the Administration may allow continued operation of such ships beyond 5 April 2005 until the date on which the ship reaches 25 years of age after the date of its

delivery.

Regulation 13(H) also allows for continued operation of oil tankers of 5,000 tons dwt and above, carrying crude oil with a density at 15°C higher than 900 kg/ m<sup>3</sup> but lower than 945 kg/ m<sup>3</sup>, if satisfactory results of the Condition Assessment Scheme warrant that, in the opinion of the Administration, the ship is fit to continue such operation, having regard to the size, age, operational area and structural conditions of the ship and provided that the continued operation shall not go beyond the date on which the ship reaches 25 years after the date of its delivery.

The Administration may allow continued operation of a single hull oil tanker of 600 tons deadweight and above but less than 5,000 tons deadweight, carrying heavy grade oil as cargo, if, in the opinion of the Administration, the ship is fit to continue such operation, having regard to the size, age, operational area and structural conditions of the ship, provided that the operation shall not go beyond the date on which the ship reaches 25 years after the date of its delivery.

The Administration of a Party to the present Convention may exempt an oil tanker of 600 tons deadweight and above carrying heavy grade oil as cargo if the ship is either engaged in voyages exclusively within an area under the Party's jurisdiction, or is engaged in voyages exclusively within an area under the jurisdiction of another Party, provided the Party within whose jurisdiction the ship will be operating agrees. The same applies to vessels operating as floating storage units of heavy grade oil.

A Party to MARPOL 73/78 shall be entitled to deny entry of single hull tankers carrying heavy grade oil which have been allowed to continue operation under the exemptions mentioned above, into the ports or offshore terminals under its jurisdiction, or deny ship-to-ship transfer of heavy grade oil in areas under its jurisdiction except when this is necessary for the purpose of securing the safety of a ship or saving life at sea.

#### **Resolutions adopted**

The amendments to MARPOL regulation 13G, the addition of a new regulation 13H, consequential amendments to the IOPP Certificate and the amendments to the Condition Assessment Scheme were adopted by the Committee as MEPC Resolutions

Among other resolutions adopted by the Committee, another on early implementation urged Parties to MARPOL 73/78 seriously to consider the application of the amendments as soon as possible to ships entitled to fly their flag, without waiting for the amendments to enter into force and to communicate this action to the Organization. It also invited the maritime industry to implement the aforesaid amendments to Annex I of MARPOL 73/78 effectively as soon as possible.

#### **Commemorative session**

The Committee also held a commemorative session from 9:30 to 10:30 on Thursday, 4 December 2003 to mark its fiftieth session and celebrate the successful operation of the MEPC over the last three decades under the theme "MEPC - Past, Present and Future". Previous Chairmen of the Committee participated and delivered messages.

The Committee recalled the situation in the beginning of the 1970s when the MEPC was established, reviewed how the Committee had handled the environmental issues surrounding international shipping over the past 30 years and confirmed the value of the MEPC in the international community and in the future activities of the Organization.  
(See Briefing 35/2003)

---

IMO - the International Maritime Organization - is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

Web site: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

Tanker safety: [http://www.imo.org/home.asp?topic\\_id=155](http://www.imo.org/home.asp?topic_id=155)

*For further information please contact:*

Lee Adamson, Senior External Relations Officer on 020 7587 3153 ([media@imo.org](mailto:media@imo.org)) or Natasha Brown, External Relations Officer on 020 7587 3274 ([media@imo.org](mailto:media@imo.org)).